

December 3, 2010 Denali Overflights Council Meeting

Council Member Attendance:

Charlie Sassara could not attend due to a last minute priority commitment.

Suzanne Rust arrived mid-morning.

All other current members in attendance.

Mike Yorke and Amanda Smith, both awaiting formal appointments, also attended.

Key Accomplishments:

- The Overflights Council adopted a new “Best Practices” recommendation for the Ruth Gorge and will be launching outreach to a broader pilot audience.
- The Overflights Council adopted a recommendation addressing hiker education about aircraft sound in the Triple Lakes area.
- Elwood Lynn, Assistant Superintendent, conceptually agreed NPS could implement “unusual event feedback” and ranger documentation of sounds for the Triple Lakes Trail area. NPS field staff will need training like the Mountaineering staff, but tailored to the north side.
- In-depth discussion of north side Best Practices, including the value and challenges of avoiding the north side “Bubble” (flying to the north, south, or at a higher elevation over a mapped area of relatively higher-value backcountry areas adjacent to the first half of the Park Road.)
- Council discussed the value of the Council’s “voluntary measures” process and the many ways this process is effective beyond generating formal recommendations.

Homework Assignments before the March 24 Talkeetna meeting:

- Joan, Tom, Brian, Nancy and Amanda Smith volunteered to coordinate a north side feedback working group to help develop a listening exercise form for rangers at Triple Lakes and elsewhere as appropriate.
- Aviation working group will continue to evaluate north side “hot spots” using Nancy’s map as a starting point.
- The Outreach working group (Tom, Tim, Erika, Mike Yorke, others?) will continue to evaluate how to increase outreach and education about the “Best Practices” for the General Aviation community. Denali Park pilot Colin Malone is also involved. Above individuals are using conferences, meetings, and other opportunities as appropriate to get the word out to audiences. Mike expects that by next Spring, the “Supplement” will include a reference to the NPS Aviation web page with NPS map and other pilot information.
- The Council will develop a draft Fact Sheet. Goal is to have something to consider and adopt at the March meeting. **Council members should circulate their ideas via email by January 17.**
- The Council would like to develop an “Interim Report” to the NPS (and for use by others observing the process from afar). **Council members should circulate their ideas via email by January 17.**

- Tom is looking into setting up a Google site where we can post, circulate and discuss internal, deliberative documents in progress. NPS is restricted from hosting such a controlled access site.
- Miriam is willing to look at improvements to the NPS web pages and links for the Overflights Council. **Council members should send Miriam their ideas via email by February 1.**
- Before the March meeting, NPS will inform Council members of the location of all sound stations set up to date, along with the location of the randomly-placed station sites targeted for 2011.
Miriam is seeking input from any Council members about the types of information needed to assist with any Denali Backcountry Plan revisions. [For example: Are people more tolerant of aircraft sounds when they are close to the road?] **Council members should send Miriam their ideas via email by February 15.**
- Sally will re-circulate the annotated Brainstorming list in both Black/White and Color before the March meeting in preparation for March discussion.

Expected topics for the March 24 Talkeetna meeting:

- NPS report on 2010 feedback cards.
- NPS report (if available) on signage and education efforts for the Triple Lakes Trail.
- NPS report on the Peter Fix UAF backcountry user survey.
- Report from the NPS on information gathering as it relates to reevaluation of the Backcountry Management Plan. Peter Newman (NPS) may be available to participate by phone from out-of-state.
- Meet the new backcountry coordinator who should be hired by then.
- Overview report on NPS efforts to reevaluate the standards and indicators in the Denali Backcountry Plan. (Report will include how upcoming surveys will help.)
- Report from Outreach working group.
- Council has opportunity to make recommendations for placement of additional sound monitoring station(s) in 2011.
- Council review of annotated Brainstorming list. Consider adding recognition of changes that have been made that are not actual recommendations.
- Make plans for another field listening session on May 21 along the Stampede Road to conduct some additional controlled fly-bys and sound monitoring.

After the March 24 meeting:

- May 21, 2011 listening session on the Stampede Road.
- Next Council meeting: September 9, 2011 in Denali Park.